/43 cont./

302 174 Since Koch-Grünberg also found only very little body painting among the Xirifna (Schirianá) (235), it is to be sus-

235. Koch-Grünberg, 1923a, p. 307.

pected that originally it was not peculiar to the three Yanomámi tribes named, but is to be traced back to Karaiben influences. The following account by Alexander von Humboldt also points to this: "The custom," writes the great investigator, "of painting the body is not equally old among all the peoples on the Orinoco. It has only been since the frequent invasions by the mighty nation of the Caraiben into these lands that it has become more general. Victors and vanquished alike were naked, and in order to be agreeable to the victor, one was obliged to paint oneself as he did and to wear his color. Now the might of the Caraiben is past, they are confined to the region between the Carony, Cuyuni, and Paraguamuzi rivers, but the Caraiben custom of coloring the entire body has persisted; the practice is more enduring than the conquest" (236).

236. A. von Humboldt, 1860, III, pp. 92/93.

301 562 i) Feather ornaments

Feather ornaments -- pauxí -- are worn by men only and chiefly on the upper arms, but occasionally also in the perforations of the ear lobes and the lower lip.

301 825 237 Under the upper-arm cords and bands, which serve primarily as fastening devices for the upper-arm ornaments, individual or several tail feathers of the arara vermelha (Ara Macao L.) -- pauxí aratexiná -- as well as small bunches of feathers, are wedged in front for war expeditions and festive occasions. The latter are always tied with a string of cotton or curauá fibers to a wooden stick 7-9 centimeters long (Ills. 9 and 14). The following list shows which birds are preferred as feather-suppliers for these objects:

Surára Pakidái waica

114 /108 cont./ According To Zerries, Barker,
769 and Dupouy, there is also a similar combat among the Waikâ,
52 in which the partners alternately beat each other on the chest
184 with clenched fists (519a, b, c). I did not observe this among

519a. Zerries, 1955b, p. 665.

519b. Barker, 1953, p. 447.

519c. Dupouy, 1953, p. 495.

114 the Surára and Pakidái. Similarly unknown there is the custom,
769 also reported by Zerries, that the men, when they run about in
276 the snuff-powder intoxication, hit each other on the back with the
palm of the hand (520). The author named regards this as a

520. Zerries 1955b, p. 665.

769 fertility rite. There seems to be involved here, however, out-
179 side influences of agricultural tribes, which is indicated also by
the ceremonial gathering of pupunha fruits (521).

521. Zerries, 1955b, p. 665.

769 It is further noteworthy that among the Waikâ women and
184 girls actively participate in the festival in that they take part in
562 some dances and even drink some of the banana soup mixed with
[266] bone ashes (522). In contrast to this, the female members of

522. Zerries, 1955b, pp. 662 ff.

the tribe act only as spectators among the Surára and Pakidái.

769 The endocannibalism should be regarded as a very signifi-
184 cant similar trait. It is documented for the Waikâ by Cruxent (523a)
266
114

523a. Cruxent, 1953a, pp. 149/50.

/229 cont./

774 The world of the "specific" hfkulas is found on the other side of the horizon and in contrast with the world of the souls. There the sablfes live forever, together with the dead animals and plants.

562 773 825 [774] It is worthwhile to refer once again to the insistence of our Sanemá informant from the Upper Caura regarding the fact that women do not have specific hfkula. He asserted to us, furthermore, that women have a different origin from men and that there still exists a purely feminine world, and that each Sanemá pueblo has its corresponding hanekasá. The informant would not identify the animal of which he spoke, but we knew [773] that it was of a well-known species. From the mythology one can deduce that the first men were made from a dead tree by the cultural hero brothers, while the first woman was fished out of a very large river.

Omao wished to metamorphose into women the butterflies which danced /230/ like people on the shore of a river, because the hanekasá are a pueblo of females in which there are only three males to insure reproduction. This pueblo of amazons is an exact replica of the female population of the rancheria neighboring a pueblo, in the characteristics of which we found a concept of alter ego for the Sanemá women.

[774] It is possible that there exists some relationship between [763] the hfkula and the male, for it is said that men die from the "weight" of the hfkula of certain animals; but we are not certain on this point (cf. Zerries, 1958b; Becher, 1960, p. 92). We are [763] more certain about the relationship which exists between women and the hanekasá animal, since a woman (of the neighboring rancheria) dies for each hanekasá which is killed. Other religious concepts which are difficult to interpret for the time being may also enter here.

791 755 A third type of theurgist which seems to exist in Sanemá society is the magician, the kálala. He does not sing like the sablf and has no influence over the specific hfkulas or over souls. He is the curer of the organism, of the body of a man. He cures by uttering tremendous cries, gives massages on the ailing and painful limbs of his patients. Suddenly he will surprise all those

2/1 [See additional data on the hanekasá on p 113 .. Analyst]

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Saneema

not only let us take his picture but begged us to take it again, with his wife beside him. Then he caused general merriment by posing beside the 'public woman' who was painted and dolled up like a bird of paradise. In a third take, he stood between the two women, caressing their breasts in an excess of zeal. At this, enthusiasm knew no bounds. Even Usrema's brother, a venerable figure with his head crowned with the scars of old battles, burst into such a vehement laugh that he lost his horrible quid of tobacco. This change of mood enabled us to get on with our job. But our takes were often interrupted, for Usrema had started a vogue and couples would come along and insist on being photographed in their full feather rig.

III

For our forthcoming river trips we were anxious to engage one of Luis Antonio's many brothers, who was apparently of the same age and had the reputation of being the tribe's most experienced traveller. To a certain extent he was even familiar with the Samatari on the other side of the cordillera. But his wife was expecting a child, so that he was prevented from going very far away from home. This seemed to us the most natural thing in the world. The wife was a tiny little lady, her only sign of maturity being her enormous belly, which very clearly did not owe its size to the swelling caused by internal parasites, the privileged possession of these women and children. Without this evidence of pregnancy she might have been taken for a girl of ten.

'The birth will come any day now,' Luis Antonio told us. 'But my brother won't be able to start straight away. He'll have to rest.'

We were reminded of the ritual of childbirth which with a few variations here and there is practised by all the Indians of tropical America. It affects the husbands as well as the wives and at bottom, in its way, contains a certain realism, characteristic of primitive peoples. Like us, they accept the principle of cause and effect and they do not really ascribe the pregnancy to strange half-magic phenomena. They know its cause for what it is—man, and his erotic acts. The effect, for them, is not in the woman herself: she is only a means, a vehicle. The true effect is the child. Up to this point, their attitude is no different from ours. The different point of view comes with the valuation placed by the Indians upon the cause after the effect has been produced. They see the role of

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

842
846 the male as continuing in importance not only after conception—at which stage, in our own positivist scientific view, the male role ceases to count—but for a certain period after the actual birth. The male, the cause, is still in the picture, according to the Indian mind, when the mother and child are living a normal life.

843
844 I had known other native peoples, and in regard to these Indian beliefs on
[128] the subject of childbirth, Luis Antonio confirmed what had already come to my
[115] knowledge.

'In order for the birth to be a success,' he told me, 'when the wife is five
[225] months gone, the husband should stop eating peccary, snake or *caribe* (the name given in Venezuela to the carnivorous fish known in Brazil as *piranha*), and the flesh of any animal of an aggressive nature.' (Here, principles of hygiene were mingled with elements of magic, as happens also in the more advanced
[846] religions.) 'Then, before the birth, during the birth and after, the man must stay in the hammock without stirring, because any strain on his part, or any mishap that came his way, would affect the child and might have dire results.'

• [562] The explanation sounds quite normal and natural once one admits the principle of continued causation in the man, the woman being regarded simply as a means. In fact there is no need for her to obey the injunction to stay in the hammock. She will continue her daily round until she feels 'something break inside her'. Then, with the midwife, she will hurry to the appointed place on the river-bank.

*123
844 I once had the chance of being present at a birth. I was with the Tauripan Indians of the Gran Sabana, and I watched hidden behind a cluster of Mauritius palms, where I could follow the principal stages of the proceedings. The woman, with her head tilted back, was seated on the clay bank in a sort of arm-chair shaped hollow which had been scooped out—whether naturally or made for the purpose I do not know. The midwife knelt at her feet, waiting. For some time both remained in this position. The woman kept giving little cries—but not really cries of pain. After a brief labour, the mother uttered one long howl which sounded to me like an 'u . . . u . . . uh' of rapture, and the midwife rose to her feet, holding up a tiny, mottled infant head downwards by the heels.

Still holding the baby by the feet, the old lady washed him in the river—
—with exactly the motions you might expect from a washerwoman giving the final rinsing to some heavy garment. I couldn't see the next step, but a few

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

minutes later the two women were quietly walking home with the baby, who appeared to be dead.

While the mother goes about her normal tasks, with the child tied on her back all the time, the father stays in the hammock, absolutely motionless, eating nothing but fruit and palm-hearts—'they don't heat the blood,' Luis Antonio assured us.

Among the Guiana-Amazon Indians I have never heard of the father himself suffering from birth-pangs during this period of rest. Such reports, however, have come from travellers and observers of the Indian tribes inhabiting the southern regions of the lower Amazon. Before one can believe them one must accept a little more than the theory of the inter-relation of cause and effect. A good dose of barefaced auto-suggestion would also be needed to account for this phenomenon, and only the most undeveloped of the Indians would be capable of it.

IV

Of kindred interest, while we are on the subject of childbirth, is the organization of Indian society. It has been asked whether the pattern is patriarchal or matriarchal, and what part is played by the individual family.

If the question is limited to the Shirians, the answer is simple: they have reached no stage of organization above the rudimentary animal level. The family has the sole function of producing life and protecting it until the offspring is capable of fending for itself. Their society is not patriarchal, because the role of the family ceases where its physical functions cease, at the point where, in civilized societies, moral functions begin. Nor is the pattern matriarchal, because the women are held in a form of slavery, though the very lack of an exact social system means that they sometimes emerge from this to become the companions of the men—a state of affairs which may be regarded as more emancipated, or less.

The children of both sexes, while they are young, remain the exclusive responsibility of the women, but when the boys reach an age at which they can do without their mothers (this generally means as soon as they cease to be breast-fed) they become independent males and do not belong to anybody in particular. Up to a certain point the father is free to pick out one who may be

10:Chagnon B-4.5 (1964-1966) 1967 SQ18 Yanomama SQ18

YANOMAMO WARFARE, SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND MARRIAGE ALLIANCES

By Napoleon Alphonseau Chagnon

121 The purpose of this analysis is to show that the large discrepancy (over 50%) between ideal marriage rules and actual marriage practice among the Yanomamö Indians of Southern Venezuela is necessitated by the politico-military milieu within which marriages are contracted. The data 114 covered in this thesis were collected from November 1964 through February 1966 during which time the author lived with these Indians. Inter-village warfare was chronic while the 184 field work was conducted. All the data were obtained from the Yanomamö in their language.

162 Census data on five Yanomamö villages are presented 897 to show that the male/female sex ratio is high. The shortage 595 of women, initially caused by female infanticide, is compli- 834 cated further by the practice of polygyny and coitus taboos 721 and is shown to be the basis of both internal and inter- 182 village fighting. Detailed historical data on village movements and warfare, collected from native informants and amplified by case materials on specific events that the author witnessed, are given to demonstrate the correlation of warfare to the shortage of women.

621 The imbalanced sex ratio is also shown to be the 613 basis of competition between co-residential patrilineal 598 descent groups, and how the members of these ally themselves 562 to other, patrilineal, local descent groups in order to maximize the number of women to which each group's members have access. When intra-village feuding over women becomes particularly intense, larger villages are shown to fragment into smaller, independent villages whose initial composition resembles a dual organization of inter-marrying patrilineal 000 descent groups. Genealogical data in both sociological and

[Introductory, R ii]

583 582 621 actual marriage practices reflect the immediate political and military needs of a given village. If it is more 583 582 153 628 advantageous to dispose of a woman in a way that promotes greater solidarity between allies, the marriage rule is not followed.[1] An eligible female, therefore, is given to a man (perhaps unrelated) in another village if her kinsmen have reason to believe that they may be required to take refuge in or request military aid from that other village.

628 574 726 562 An ally's demands are not to be taken lightly, for to fail in an obligation to an ally may have the gravest consequences for survival; one tactic of Yąnomamö warfare is invitations to feasts during which a disgruntled group kills the male guests and seizes their women. These treacherous feasts (nomohoni) occur often enough, so that local groups 628 583 582 are always suspicious of their allies. A dependable ally is won at the expense of women. Failure to hand over enough women creates a frustrated ally who is extremely dangerous. Yąnomamö political behavior has largely to do with disposing of enough women to make the ally loyal, but not to give more women than is necessary to achieve this end; miscalculation in this respect has serious consequences. As it is imperative for local groups, for reasons to be outlined below, to have allies, it is likewise necessary for them to enter into marriage exchanges with other groups.

[1] When women are given to men from other villages, the men rarely, if ever, are related to them as FaSiSo or MoBrSo. The exchange of women for purposes of alliance usually establishes the initial kinship ties between the groups of the wife receivers and wife givers.

is allied to another which can provide it with more military assistance and desirable trade goods than the former can give to the latter, an imbalance in the exchanges of women will follow. The imbalance will favor the village that, for reasons of size and of existing military patterns, least needs the military aid of the other.

The character of Yąnomamö warfare is not as intimately related to village size as might be expected, although, of course, larger villages are best able to conduct warfare successfully over a long period of time from one location. Larger villages are less likely to be forced to abandon their location because of raids from smaller groups, whereas smaller groups are markedly vulnerable in this respect. Nevertheless, no one village is large enough to withstand successfully military pressures from a cluster of smaller, allied villages, and, therefore, the members of all villages seek defensive alliances with their neighbors. Such alliances are based on the exchange of women.

Other demographic factors, in addition to sheer size of villages, affect marriage practices. The ratio of males to females, for example, is high, partly because of the practice of female infanticide. Moreover, the shortage of women is compounded by other factors; sexual intercourse is prohibited with pregnant women and those who have nursing children, and polygyny causes an unequal distribution of the available women. It would be difficult to exaggerate the consequences for Yąnomamö social organization of this single

phenomenon: the feuds that lead to the splitting of villages and the cause of fighting between villages are largely the result of the shortage of women.

Within villages, then, the bachelors and those men whose wives are either pregnant or are nursing children constantly threaten village stability by seeking liaisons with the wives of other men. The discovery of these liaisons usually leads to violent fighting between the group of close relatives of the woman's husband and that of her lover; and this frequently causes the village to split. The larger the village, the more likely it is that such liaisons will develop and that the subsequent fighting will lead to fragmentation of the village.

Village size, then, is limited by the capacity of the kinship network to regulate internal feuds, and by the nature of the actual or current warfare pattern of the neighboring villages. As the village grows in size, the incidence of extra-marital affairs and club-fights appears to increase, while the ability of kinship to regulate the affairs of a multi-lineage village diminishes in proportion. Villages then split into smaller groups that comprise two or more small, cohesive, intermarrying local lineages; each group establishes an independent village and enters into marriage alliances with other villages. The prior existence of hostilities with other villages may delay the split, but does not prevent it. In short, the relationship of Yanomamö village size to village solidarity nicely illustrates Leslie

*621 White's generalization that

> every society tends to behave in such a way as to achieve that balance between size and solidarity that will give it the maximum effectiveness in carrying on its life-sustaining activities. (1959:104)

*691 *688 • 562 583 582 121 Belligerent ideology and aggressive behavior

Village size plays an important role in the nature of the political relationships between groups that are not linked by kinship ties. As mentioned above, larger villages tend to use their strength and dominance to upset the exchange balance of women. But the degree to which a powerful group is able to force a dependent ally to cede women is limited by the ability of the smaller group to raid the *611 *612 724 152 181 larger village successfully. In ideological terms the Yanomamö express this capacity to wage war by placing emphasis on and valuing aggressive behavior. It is considered both proper and desirable to act ferociously, as this informs neighbors of the group's capacity to wage war and warns them that the group is willing to resort to war in political dealings.

*621 *628 526 574 152 Members of small villages are consequently constrained to behave militantly toward larger neighbors to limit the coercion that the larger group may be tempted to try. Their fierce behavior takes the form of threat, bluff, chicanery in trading and, most important, challenges to duels. Frequently, when villagers are invited to feast with an allied group, the invitation includes a challenge to a chest-pounding

484 plantains to eat en route. Most of the time they did not even carry their hammocks, as these could be easily manufactured from bark strips in a matter of minutes.

[462] [835] Women make several kinds of baskets, including ones to carry the family possessions when the group moves. When the entire village moves, progress is slow and only a few miles are covered each day. The reason for this is that [838] [858] [859] older people and those who are sick travel very slowly, children must be carried by their parents, and food in large quantities must be transported to provision the moving group. Thus, a trip that a group of young men could easily make in one day would require two or three days if the entire village moved that distance.

415 [323] The only non-portable[1] (as well as the only durable) item made by the Yąnomamö is a large, heavy, poorly fired clay pot. These are manufactured by only a few villages, [84] [493] which serve as trading centers for this industry. They are [462] [492] [562] made by men and are their property since women are too clumsy to be permitted to handle and use them and would probably break them. When a pot does break, the fragments are used as mortars for grinding drugs, small stone celts, found in the woods by the Yąnomamö, serving as pestles. The larger fragments of a broken pot are used as cooking plates in the [199] manufacture of cassava bread. Despite the fact that most of the Yąnomamö villages have not been contacted directly, the

---

[1]The pots are concealed in the garden when the group moves.

CHAPTER II

THE DEMOGRAPHIC BASIS OF WARFARE, POLITICAL ALLIANCE, AND SETTLEMENT DYNAMICS[1]

A. The Shortage of Women and Feuding

As outlined in the Introduction, the shortage of women among the Yąnomamö has far-reaching consequences in almost every aspect of their social organization. In this chapter I will establish the general functional relationship between this demographic fact and the dynamics of village feuding, village splitting, and village re-location. These phenomena will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, particularly with reference to the kinship system.

The Yąnomamö practice male and female infanticide. There are a number of reasons accounting for this practice. First, young couples do not relish the prospect of a long period of celibacy that pregnancy and lactation taboos impose on them. From the time a woman discovers she is pregnant until the time she weans her child, she is not allowed to have sexual relations. The time period involved varies from

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 85]

[1] The data discussed in this and subsequent chapters are drawn from the 5 villages, listed in Table 1, in which I spent most of my time. The historical and genealogical relationships of these villages are given later in the text. My generalizations on Yąnomamö culture and social organization are applicable to those groups occupying the Upper Orinoco and the Mavaca River basis. (See Map B, next page.)

847 [848] child: he had scrupulously observed the coitus taboo during lactation--the wife had not.

Most cases of infanticide take place when a couple already has a small child. Sickness takes a heavy toll during the early months of a child's life, and women are reluctant to jeopardize a child that has already survived the first two years. So, they frequently kill the new-born so that their older child will have no competition for milk. Bahimi, a woman of some 30 years, killed a new male baby shortly after I started my fieldwork in Bisassi-tedi. She explained, tearfully, that she did not feel that she could successfully raise the new child because she still had a son that was nursing.

847 562 162 These cases do not, however, explain why there is a consistent bias to kill females rather than males. When I discovered how significantly the sex ratio diverged from the expected value of 1.0 in some villages, I tried to get an explanation from the Yąnomamö. I was surprised to find out that they were ignorant of their own bias in killing children. [842] What did come to light, however, was the fact that Yąnomamö prefer to have a male baby for their first child and, if it turns out that the first child is a girl, they will frequently kill her. If, however, a couple prefers to have a girl and the first child is a boy, they generally do not kill the boy.[1]

[114] [582] [1] Whatever the reason may be for the preference toward males as eldest children, there is one structural effect that deserves further enquiry. Rose (1960) effectively showed that where males tend to marry females that are younger than them-

Several kinds of demographic data suggest that the rate of female infanticide is high. Table 1 gives the sex ratios of five Yąnomamö villages. The sex ratio for the total population sample (576 individuals) gives a more meaningful estimate of the rate of female infanticide, as there is considerable variation by village in the value of the sex ratio. The excess of males in the total population (8%) gives a first approximation of the frequency of female infanticide. The variation in the sex ratio by the village, on the other hand, expresses the political relationships of the villages to their allies. That is, the distribution of women in these five villages is a function of the military requirements of the particular villages in the marriage alliance network. Thus, the cline in sex ratio from Reyaboböwei-tedi to Biaaasi-tedi (ignoring the Patanowä-tedi, who are not allied to the other groups) reflects a dominance gradient in politico-military requirements of each village. The total sample of 576 individuals must be considered in order to estimate the frequency of female infanticide among the Yąnomamö, but the political relationships between the villages must be understood to account for the variation by village of the value

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 69]

selves, it is highly unlikely that men will marry a FaSiDa, despite the kinship terminology. Rose did not, however, consider the possibility that sibships may have a systematic bias in their composition; if males tend to be older than their sisters considering all sibships, the probability that a FaSiDa is of marriageable age is increased. I specifically questioned the relationship between female infanticide and FaSiDa marriage, and the Yąnomamö denied any correlation between the two practices. There can be no doubt, however, that the occurrence of FaSiDa marriage among the Yąnomamö is made more probable by female infanticide.

Table 1: Village Size, Male/Female Sex-ratio, and Percentage of Excess Males.

Village Name	Size	Males	Females	Sex-Ratio	% Excess Males
Bayaboböwei-tedi	77	47	30	1.6	22
Mŋariböwei-tedi	85	47	38	1.2	11
Patanowä-tedi	212	122	90	1.4	15
Monou-tedi	66	34	32	1.1	3
Bisaasi-tedi	136	62	74	0.8	-9
Totals:	576	312	264		

$\frac{312}{264}$ .....1.2 Total Male/Female Sex-ratio

$\frac{48}{576}$ .....8% Excess of Males

10:Chagnon E-4.5 (1964-1966) 1967 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

of the sex ratio, and the distribution of the women among them.

In Chapter 5 I will show how the two Shamatari villages, Reyabobŏwei-tedi and Mŏmaribŏwei-tedi, participated in a treacherous feast during which they killed a number of their kinsmen from Mŏwŏraoba-tedi. This feast committed the two Shamatari villages to an alliance with the Bisaasi-tedi and Monou-tedi in which the latter two villages were, in a political-military sense, less dependent on the support of the Shamatari than the Shamatari were on them. The Mŏmaribŏwei-tedi and the Reyabobŏwei-tedi represented the front of the Shamatari expansion into the unoccupied Mavaca River area. The territory they abandoned as they expanded to the west was subsequently occupied by other Shamatari villages, the members of which were historically related to them.[1] By participating in the treacherous feast and becoming enemies to their congeners, the two Shamatari villages subordinated themselves to the interests of the Monou-tedi and the Bisaasi-tedi. Since they formed a buffer between the villages of Bisaasi-tedi and Monou-tedi on the one hand, and the Shamatari village of Mŏwŏraoba-tedi on the other, they bore the brunt of the raids mounted by the latter in revenge for the treachery. In short, they had only two dependable allies, the Monou-tedi and the Bisaasi-tedi. Their dependence on these allies was transformed into an im-

[1] See Chapter 5, "The History of Paruritawŏ-tedi."

Their dependence
*628 on these allies was transformed into an im-
583 balance in the exchange of women between the two groups of
162 villages, accounting for the variation in sex-ratio given for
• 562 the villages in Table 1.
*621

*628 The degree to which each village is dependent on its
583 allies is roughly indicates in Table 1. The Reyabobŏwei-tedi,
726 being closer, geographically, to the Mŏwĭraoba-tedi, suffered
722 more from the revenge raids of the latter. In other words, they needed military aid from their own allies to a greater extent, and have, accordingly, lost far more women to their allies as a consequence. But the true situation is even more remarkable than suggested by the sex ratio for the Reyabobŏwei-tedi; a large percentage of the women in their village have been abducted by them in raids against the Mŏwĭraoba-tedi, i.e., they have actually lost more women to their allies in exchanges than is suggested by the sex-ratio alone.

*621 Again, the sex ratios for the Bisaasi-tedi and the
162 *628 Monou-tedi are misleading without additional information.
583 These two villages would seem, from Table 1, to have gained a remarkable number of women in the political alliances they
162 made with their Shamatari friends. This, however, is not the
*628 only reason they have such a high percentage of women in
*621 their populations. In 1950 these villages were victimized
726 by the Mŏwĭraoba-tedi and the Iwahikoroba-tedi in a treacher-
627 ous feast. They lost approximately 15 men. Were two-thirds
165 of these men alive today, for example, the resultant sex ratios for the Monou-tedi and the Bisaasi-tedi population would more accurately reflect the dominance gradient, measured

in terms of women ceded to them by the Shamatari, that they maintain over their Shamatari allies.

The sex ratio data give a rough idea, then, of the extent of female infanticide and, in addition, reflect the political relationships of the villages to each other in terms of the flow of women. Other demographic data, however, suggest that the practice of female infanticide is even higher than the sex ratios alone indicate. Table 2 gives the stated cause of death of 240 adult individuals. These individuals are related to the living members of the three villages of Monou-tedi, Bisaasi-tedi, and Patanowë-tedi. It is immediately apparent that more men die in warfare than women,[1] implying that the frequency of female infanticide is substantially higher than the 8% suggested by sex ratio data.

There are several ways the Yanomamö remedy their woman shortage. Young bachelors, for example, practice sodomy (bei kë bosi kuwemou, bei kë bosi waumou) with each other. These relationships develop into a 'buddy' system (ãawë) and promote ties of friendship that extend into adult life. Some of my informants confidentially told me that particular young men had been known to copulate with dogs in estrus, but this was regarded with contempt by all who knew about it. Homosexuality, however, was not considered despicable, but it was thought to be infantile. Most of the

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 63]

[1] Twenty-two per cent (31/138) of all male deaths were due to warfare, while only 6% (6/102) of female deaths were due to this cause.

835 terms for a number of men that were, genealogically, her distant agnates. She explained the usage by the fact that she had incestuous relationships with several of them when she was a young woman. Kaobawë told me that he had incestuous relationships with Hayamamasimi, his FaBrDa, but did not want the others in the village to know about it. In another case, a man married three girls who were his FaBrSoSoDa, i.e., his 'granddaughters.' The Yanomamö explanation of this case illustrates the relationship of the woman shortage to warfare
*621 and alliance. The people in question all live in Patanowë-
*623 tedi, a village that has numerous enemies, only one ally,
162 and a serious woman shortage. The parents of the girls in
• 562 question did not want them to marry into the village of the
*628 allies, as they had given a number of women to the allies
584 already. The man, Ishiweiwë, had no spouse and could not
582 get one from the allies. So, the parents of the girls stopped
601 calling Ishiweiwë by the appropriate consanguineal terms and
835 began calling him by affinal terms suited to the marriage of
183 the three girls to him. The girls, in turn, stopped calling him grandfather. Ishiweiwë married just one of the girls at first; after she died, he married the other two, as he already called them 'wife' by virtue of the fact that he had married their sister. The initial marriage was the major hurdle. After he married the first girl and the kinship terms were

---

835 the mother-in-law category are not avoided, nor are FaSi or MoBrWi. The implications of this last fact for Homans and Schneider's work are obvious.

835 601 183 investigated discrepant kinship usage I found that the terminology changed because of incestuous relationships between my informant (or his close kinsman) and the members of the local lineage in question. I have not investigated all discrepant usages, but the high incidence of the terminological aberrations suggests that incest is widely practiced.

835 601 183 582 [162] [542] Incestuous affairs and marriages occur largely because of the woman shortage. I have already mentioned that Ishiweiwë of Patanowë-tedi married his three 'granddaughters' because he could not find a wife of the appropriate category. A similar situation occurred in Bisaasi-tedi. Keromawë, one of the important men in the lower group of Bisaasi-tedi, has redefined a number of his classificatory daughters as sisters,[1] thereby making it possible for his sons to marry their children, otherwise incestuous marriages. His oldest son, Bïkïböwë, technically married his FaDaDa, but because his father had redefined the mother of Bïkïböwë's wife as 'sister,' the marriage was appropriate within their marriage rules.

837 *621 578 [721] The woman shortage is remedied by illicit affairs within the village. These affairs are the major cause of feuds and village splits. During the 15 months covered by my field work five club-fights occurred. Four of them were over women who had been caught in illicit affairs, and in one case, the village split into hostile factions that began

---

[1] See Chapter 4 for detailed discussion of this.

10:Chagnon E-4.5 (1964-1966) 1987 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

raiding each other.[1]

That the shortage of women is the basis of internal feuding is illustrated by a practice recently adopted by members of the New Tribes Mission working in the village of Kosholowä-tedi, a small village on the Padamo River. The missionaries had a major problem with club-fighting within the village, most of which developed out of sexual liasons between married women and married men. The missionaries began an active campaign aimed at changing the coitus taboos during pregnancy and lactation. They were successful in their efforts, and the major result was that fighting was almost completely stopped. (Another result was a sharp increase in births.)

Village size and composition have an effect on the number of sexual liaisons within a village, as illicit affairs are more difficult to discover in large villages. The Bisaasi-tedi and the Monou-tedi, as can be seen from Table 1, have less of a woman shortage than the other villages. Nevertheless, fights over women do break out in these villages. One of the clubfights I witnessed took place between two groups of Monou-tedi men in the village of Bisaasi-tedi. One of the Monou-tedi men had wanted to carry on an affair with the wife of Konoreiwä, another man of his village, but was unable to do so while the Monou-tedi lived in their own village. Once when the Monou-tedi moved to Bisaasi-tedi to

[1]See Chapter 5, Tables 5 and 6, for a summary of the causes of village splits and hostilities.

avoid the raids from the PatanowÃ-tedi, the man in question used this opportunity to have an affair with KonoreiwÃ's wife, presuming that he would not be discovered because the village was filled with people. He was discovered, despite his discretion, and challenged to a duel by KonoreiwÃ. The entire village participated in the club fight. KonoreiwÃ punished his wife by hitting her in the mouth with a glowing fire brand, severely burning her lips.

Finally, and most drastically, the woman shortage is remedied by raiding other villages to abduct women. This, however, is war. The ever-present possibility of this occurring, however, is a constant threat to the stability of political alliances, for allies occasionally turn on each other with the intent of seizing females. It is largely for this reason that allies cede women to each other peacefully by contracting marriage alliances. In November 1964 the PatanowÃ-tedi arrived at Bisaasi-tedi to participate in a feast. This was the first time the groups had gathered as groups since they separated from each other on hostile terms in ca. 1944. They intended to make peace at this feast, but a party of men from Monou-tedi, a village that also formed part of the group before the 1944 split, arrived uninvited and abducted seven women from the PatanowÃ-tedi. This ultimately provoked a war between the PatanowÃ-tedi and Monou-tedi, and determined the settlement pattern of both groups, as well as their political activities, all during my field work. The war was still being actively prosecuted when I

726 628 knowing that they would not be raided in return; the Patanowä-tedi simply could not conduct the war on that immense a scale. The participation of these peripheral villages in the war against the Patanowä-tedi conferred three advantages on them. First, the probability was good that they would benefit materially in the raiding by capturing women. Secondly, they demonstrated their solidarity to their allies at little cost or danger to themselves, thereby putting these allies under obligation to reciprocate the favor at a later time. Finally, the peripheral villages were able to demonstrate their ferocity to their neighbors by going to war, although the danger to themselves was almost negligible. In total, about 726 922 628 a dozen villages began raiding the Patanowä-tedi in mid 1965, forcing them to abandon their garden before they could 36 24 establish a new one elsewhere. The Patanowä-tedi had no alternative but to take refuge in the village of their allies, the Ashadowä-tedi. Without the aid of the Ashadowä-tedi, the Patanowä-tedi would have been forced to colonize from their single site and sustain very heavy losses from the incessant raids of their enemies. As the situation turned out, the Patanowä-tedi lost a large number of people in the raiding, despite having this ally, but the losses would have been much heavier without them.

162 552 (847) [83] **Summary**

The practice of female infanticide leads to a shortage of women. The Yanomamö attempt to overcome the shortage,

162 sexually, by the practices of sodomy, wife sharing, incest,
562 and permitted affairs. However, two ways in which the problem
83 is resolved--clandestine affairs within villages and raiding
162 to abduct women between villages--create political situations
562 that favor the development of political alliances for the
583 purposes of defense. Since these involve the transfer of
849 women between the allies, the practice of female infanticide
921 constitutes a functional component in the marriage alliance
922 system.
628

The process of village splitting, growing out of feuds
621 over women, results in the establishment of small, militarily
628 vulnerable villages. The timing of the split is conditioned
578 by the agricultural requirements of the village on the one
241 hand, and the nature of its politico-military relationships
922 with other villages on the other. The graded system of violence permits flexibility in the settlement pattern and the precise conditions of a village split. Because the Yąnomamö rely heavily on cultivated foods, alliances may be interpreted as an attempt to maximize the chances of survival of groups of kinsmen as independent groups; the possibility always exists that a given group may be forced by its enemies to seek protection and provisions in the village of an ally.

613 421 [562] associated with control over real property in most tribal societies. Among the Yąnomamö the corporate estate consists of rights in disposing of females; property does not play any role in the functioning of the descent group.

613 602 562 584 The relationship between males in regulating the disposition of the descent group's women is ambiguous, for their rights in particular women vary, largely with genealogical distance and the size of the descent group in question. And, rights in women are intangible. Thus, local descent groups[1] among the Yąnomamö, despite the fact that they are corporate, are not cohesive, solidary units because of the ambiguous way male members are related to each other.

613 *62 [614] [616] Patrilineal descent is virtually non-functional outside the local descent group. There are no corporate descent groups other than those that exist at the village level, i.e., the Yąnomamö do not have clans or moieties. Hence, agnates not only enter into competition with each other because of the nature of their rights in the women of their group, there are no other institutions based on agnatic descent that promote amity and solidarity among them.

---

[1] "The core of such a group is composed of the adult males of a kin group all resident in one place . . . the corporate group of persons who have the most decisive say in bringing about an arranged marriage is always a group of coresident males representing, as a rule, three genealogical generations, namely: the old men or grandfathers, the normal adults or fathers, and the young adults or sons." E. R. Leach, 1963:56. Among the Yąnomamö, the generation of grandfathers is only rarely represented in the local descent group. [603]

613 his brothers, terminologically, they have more in common with
602
*621 each other than they do with him. As he depends on them for
584
582 support within the village, he is under obligation to them and can not take their suggestions lightly.[1]

*621 Again, if there are two politically important descent
613 groups of the same lineage within a large village, and if
602
• 582 there are, in addition, a number of agnatically related
584
736 females not belonging unambiguously to either one, problems arise over the disposition of the women; there will be rivalry between the two descent groups concerning the marriages (or remarriages) of these women. Situations like these arise when the father and brothers of the women are killed in raids or die of other causes, or when the woman's first husband dies after her (deceased) agnates arranged her marriage. The Bisaasi-tedi, for example, split into two villages, each led by members of the same lineage. They had been victimized by a Shamatari group which killed a large number of men during a treacherous feast. There were a number of women, consequently, who were ambiguously related to the surviving males of the Upper and Lower halves of Bisaasi-tedi. One of the descent groups in what is now Lower Bisaasi-tedi managed to gain the upper hand in the

---

[583] [1]There seems to be a marked tendency for the daughters of such men to be given to men in other villages when alliances are made. I am unable to say, on the basis of my present data, whether such alliances are forced on these men by their agnates, or whether these men in fact prefer to dispose of their daughters in this way. This practice tends to keep such men more isolated from their agnates and prevents them from establishing strong affinal ties within the village.

disposition of these women and their children, a factor that did not contribute to the amity of relationships between the two agnatically related descent groups.[1]

A girl's marriage is arranged by her close male kinsmen. Her father has the greatest influence in the decision as to which man she will be given. If the man had adult sons, their opinion can overrule the decision of the father. If a girl marries within the village, she can depend on her agnates for protection against a cruel husband. Ideally, a woman prefers to marry her FaSiSo or her MoBrSo.[2] If the marriage rule is not followed, women prefer to be given to a non-kinsman within the village.

Men are obliged to perform bride service in the village of their inlaws, after which they may take their wife back to their natal village. Occasionally a woman leaves her natal village to seek a husband in another village, but this is always against the wishes of the girl's agnates. Such situations usually develop into wars between the village of the girl and the village that took the girl. The war between

---

[1]See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of this incident.

[2]By FaSiSo I do not exclusively mean the biological relative, although he, too, would be included. By extending their kinship terminology, the Yanomamö also include non-consanguines in these categories of relatives. For example, a young man in Bisaasi-tedi married his FaBrWiBrDa while I was in the field. To him, the girl was his MoBrDa because FaBr was 'father' and 'father's wife' was 'mother'; the girl, therefore, was MoBrDa.

Most of the displays of [111] ferocity have to do with cruelties inflicted on women, particularly wives, as this is both a safe and a legitimate way of displaying aggressiveness.

One of the corollaries of this ideology is to take advantage of weak neighbors, for in so doing one can display ferocity and gain materially (by abducting women). Villages that have many enemies are particularly good targets, for other villages can participate in the raiding against these disadvantaged villages with little fear of retaliation (see Chapter V). This attitude is also manifest in the political dealings with allies. Whenever allied villages differ markedly in size and strength, the weaker of the two is at a disadvantage, for the larger village will coerce it out of women. Since women are greatly prized, there is the constant threat that an ally will turn against its friends if the circumstances indicate that a substantial number of women can be abducted. Members of allied villages that have recently entered into alliance never really trust each other, as each fears that the other may turn on it to seize women. Whenever the men of the village go on raids, they conceal their women and children in the jungle in case a group of men from an allied village unexpectedly visit and find the poorly guarded women too much of a temptation to pass by.

Political dealings between allies are such that each attempts to demonstrate to the other that it is completely sovereign and capable of defending itself. No group can afford to permit the notion among allies that it is weak and

128 extending the model one more generation, maintaining the pattern already shown in the model, the numbers of individuals included in the new figure would approach the size of a small Yanomamö village. But, by extending the model one generation, we begin to put stress on one of the relationships, the tie between agnates of the same age, if we simultaneously introduce additional factors such as a sex ratio greater than 1.0.
121 973 975 983 836 837 I can illustrate the same stress in Figure 1 by assuming that polygyny occurs. Presume that individual $A_{2.1}$ is older than his brother and is given both of the daughters of $B_{1.2}$ for his wives. As individual $A_{2.2}$ gets older, he will have no sexual alternative but to seek liaisons with the wives of his older brother, as all other women in the diagram stand in incestuous relationship to him. In Figure 1 $A_{2.1}$ and $A_{2.2}$ are drawn as full brothers. When situations of this sort occur, the older brother may give one of his wives to the younger brother, or at least permit him to have sexual relationships with one of
123 162 602 616 562 578 them until he procures his own wife. If, however, we extend Figure 1 by another generation and specify the same conditions in Generation 3, the males involved are one degree of relationship more remote from each other. Were we to introduce the factor of woman shortage in addition to polygyny, the rivalry between agnates for the women in Generation 3 would increase accordingly, and fighting would likely result: distantly related agnates of the same age are ambiguously related to each other regarding both the disposition of women and acquisition of women for spouses.

that Lower Bisaasi-tedi approximates a dual organization of two intermarrying lineages, Sha and Tom.

There are two senses in which Lower Bisaasi-tedi is not representative of the typical Yąnomamö village: the sex ratio is nearly 1.0, i.e., there are about as many females as there are males in the village, and the group is politically stable and cohesive; not a single fight took place within this group during the 15 months of my field work. The sex ratio is explainable by several factors. First, the members of this village have been particularly successful in forcing their Shamatari allies to cede women to them while at the same time have managed to avoid reciprocating the exchanges. Secondly, a large Shamatari family from Mąmariböwei-tedi recently took refuge in the village, a family that comprises two males and four females. Finally, many of the men killed in the 1950-51 treacherous feast were from this faction of Bisaasi-tedi.

The solidarity of Lower Bisaasi-tedi stems from a number of factors. First, all adult men are married. More importantly, the core lineages (Sha and Tom) are linked to each other in three generations by marriage ties, and the leader of this village, Rerohawä, has astutely manipulated

---

logy.) The Tom lineage is the dominant political group in a number of villages north of the Orinoco River in the vicinity of Mäata-a (see Map B, Chapter II). These villages trace their origins back to a single group (indicated as Husirawä-urihi-tedi on Map C, Chapter V) to which the members of Namowei-tedi were allied about 1900. All living members of the Tom lineage found today among the Namowei-tedi are in Bisaasi-tedi's lower village, where they constitute a major political bloc in the affairs of that group.

*621
622
613
602 subordinate his potential competitors by the way in which he disposed of the women and/or their children.

*621
613
602
562 There are a number of individuals in Lower Bisaasi-tedi who are not related agnatically to either the Sha or the Tom lineages. These individuals do not, however, constitute a political bloc; each is tied by marriage to the two lineages, and are therefore subordinate (by virtue of obligations to their wife-givers) to the members of that lineage. Most of these individuals are females, and do not represent a political factor in the affairs of the village. Some of them were abducted from Shamatari villages in the past, and a larger number of them were obtained in marriage alliances from other Shamatari recently. The six adult males of this non-agnatic group who might pose a threat to the stability of the village by making liaisons with married women are all married themselves. With the exception of two brothers, they are unrelated to each other. One of them is married to Reromawë's daughter, another is married to his son's daughter, and the two brothers (actual WiBrSo to Reromawë) are married, respectively, to Reromawë's classificatory son's daughter in Upper Bisaasi-tedi and will move there while he does his bride service, and a classificatory brother's daughter.[1] The remaining two men are in Faction B. One of these joined Reromawë's group before 1945 to get revenge against the

582
583

[1] This woman is one of the seven abducted by the Monou-tedi from the Patanowë-tedi and taken, in turn, by Reromawë's group from the Monou-tedi. Technically, then, Reromawë is her 'father' and the man to whom she was given is 'son-in-law' to Reromawë. See Chapter V.

*621 members of his own village, Hasabŏwĕ-tedi, who killed his
613 father. Reromawĕ's group was then actively raiding Hasabŏwĕ-
602 tedi. The man was given a wife in Reromawĕ's village, the
* 562 widow of a Tom man killed in the 1950-51 treacherous feast.
582 The man's two daughters are married to Sha men.[1] The last
583 man and his family joined Reromawĕ's group in 1965 to take refuge from his own villagers, the Mŏmaribŏwei-tedi, some of whom wanted to take his wives away from him for being brutal. He had previously given a daughter to a Tom man and when he was forced to flee from his own village, took refuge with his son-in-law. Appendix A gives more details on each individual discussed above.

*628 Lower Bisaasi-tedi has political ties with a number
582 of villages. It has recently (since 1960) entered into al-
583 liance with two Shamatari villages, Reyabobŏwei-tedi and Mŏmaribŏwei-tedi, and has managed to obtain a number of women from the latter village as wives for young bachelors
*628 in the group. The Mŏmaribŏwei-tedi visit them frequently to
527 feast and trade, and the members of Lower Bisaasi-tedi
574 reciprocate the visits. The ties between Lower Bisaasi-tedi
438 and the Mŏmaribŏwei-tedi are nearly as strong as the ties
602 between Lower Bisaasi-tedi and any of its cognate villages to whose members the Lower Bisaasi-tedi are agnatically re-
*628 lated. Of the villages that are cognate to Lower Bisaasi-tedi,
602 Monou-tedi is perhaps the most dependable ally, because the

---

[1] Reromawĕ's actual son, and Reromawĕ's classificatory son in Upper Bisaasi-tedi.

*628 [602] Lower Bisaasi-tedi gave its members refuge during the times when the Monou-tedi were threatened by raids from the Patanowë-tedi. The closest neighbor, geographically, to Lower Bisaasi-[361] [613] tedi is Upper Bisaasi-tedi (a mere 400 meters upstream), the dominant political group of that village being a segment of the Sha lineage. The two villages, however, behave quite independently in their alliance patterns. Lower Bisaasi-tedi's political interests are in the Mõmaribõwei-tedi at the present time, whereas Upper Bisaasi-tedi's interests are in the *628 726 Reyabobõwei-tedi, Karohi-tedi, and Widokaiya-tedi. In the war against the Patanowë-tedi, both the Lower and Upper Bisaasi-tedi aid the Monou-tedi by providing warriors for the raiding parties, and by giving refuge to the Monou-tedi when raiding is particularly intense.

*621 162 562 571 Lower Bisaasi-tedi is a cohesive, well-integrated, stable village. Much of the stability and cohesiveness derives from the fact that there is not a shortage of women and there are well-defined patterns of behavior for all members *628 722 vis-à-vis others. But, Lower Bisaasi-tedi is not a militarily viable group. It could not last long as an independent village if the warfare situation became intense; the group is not completely independent of the Upper Bisaasi-tedi village. At least once during my field work the Lower Bisaasi-tedi group coalesced with the Upper group when a raid from the Patanowë-tedi seemed imminent. And, if raiding from the Patanowë-tedi began, the group would have to merge with Upper Bisaasi-tedi for defense purposes. When I began my field work in 1964,

aid of allies such as the two Bisaasi-tedi groups, the Monou-tedi probably could not survive as an independent village because of the size differential between themselves and their enemies. It is noteworthy, however, that the Monou-tedi are more independent than the Lower Bisaasi-tedi, for they moved to a new site rather than recombine (permanently) with their agnates in Bisaasi-tedi. This avoidance pattern is not a probable alternative for the Lower Bisaasi-tedi because of their relative lack of potential to conduct effective warfare, even considering the fact that their allies would aid them. Lower Bisaasi-tedi would invite raiding by moving further away from Upper Bisaasi-tedi, as their erstwhile neighbors and allies, from whom they have managed to obtain so many women, would be more equal in strength and would demand more women from them. Or, other neighbors, such as the Widokaiya-tedi, would descend on them hoping to abduct women, of which the Lower Bisaasi-tedi have many. They have managed to obtain these women from a position of strength, but a large factor in their strength is the fact that they are still dependent on Upper Bisaasi-tedi. Without the latter, they would be in a serious military situation.

Summary

Village splitting develops out of feuding over women; the kinship lines along which villages split reflect the strength of the tie linking descent groups to each other by marriage or promises to exchange women, while at the same time illustrates the weakness of the agnatic bonds.

contributes to the reduction in the intensity of warfare. This stems from the fact that the Caribs have long had access to firearms, and the Yąnomamö avoid attacking Carib villages. It is not likely that Yąnomamö villages settled close to or among Caribs would be raided by other Yąnomamö, for the Caribs would either defend their co-residents or provide them with firearms to retaliate. Certainly, I know of no cases of Yąnomamö villages mounting raids on other Yąnomamö who live near or among Carib Indians.

Throughout the thesis I have emphasized the causal relationship between the shortage of women and the development of hostilities within and between villages. The same relationship appears to hold in the Urariçás area, as the following incident illustrates. The missionaries discovered that one of the Yąnomamö women had two husbands. They felt that this was an unacceptable situation and persuaded the woman that she should abandon one of the men. This man then could not find another eligible woman of the appropriate age and relationship to marry, so he organized a party of men to accompany him on a wife-hunting trip to a neighboring, but unrelated, village. On arriving he informed the people that he had come to teach them a new and powerful institution, prayer, which he had learned from the missionaries. He had his hosts kneel and bow their heads; then he and his companions fell upon them with machetes and killed them. The visitors seized the hosts' women and fled. In an area where warfare is rare, this incident indelibly underscores the

relationship between the shortage of women and the initiation of inter-village hostilities.[1]

One conclusion I reach, therefore, is that the frequency of hostilities within and between villages varies directly with the opportunities for males to satisfy their sexual desires in a socially acceptable way. In other words, internal village fighting and inter-village warfare should diminish in proportion to the increase in number of women to which each man has sexual access. Several kinds of data support this conclusion. First, the histories of the five villages and the data on village movements and warfare during 1964-66 show that most village splitting and most village warfare arise from feuds over women. Second, there was no fighting within Lower Bisaasi-teḍi during the 15 months of my field work. This village has no adult bachelors, and has a male/female sex-ratio close to 1.0. Third, when missionaries changed the Yąnomamö attitudes toward coitus with pregnant and lactating women in one village, internal feuding reduced markedly.[2] Fourth, the data from the Uraricaá Yąnomamö on extra-marital sexual relationships imply that

[1] I cite this incident because it is an unambiguous--perhaps even classic--example of a war developing due to a shortage of women. I am in no sense criticizing the missionaries; they can not be held responsible for the violent nature of their charges in this or any other case. Their kindness and good example have, in a number of cases with which I am familiar, prevented bloodshed among the Indians.

[2] Personal communication from Mr. Wallace Jank, a New Tribes Missionary working among the Yąnomamö on the Padamo River.

fighting and warfare are reduced when the available women carry on affairs. Thus, I conclude that any factor which increases the sexual activity of females or increases the female/male ratio reduces the frequency of fighting.

The second conclusion I reach is that Yąnomamö marriage practices can be predicted, in a broad sense, once the conditions of warfare are specified. The greater the intensity of warfare, the more marriage practice will deviate from the preferred types. This follows from the fact that the Yąnomamö are forced to base military alliances on exchanges of women, limiting the degree to which ideal marriage preferences are expressed in practice.

We may now turn to a more theoretical discussion. Writing on the functional significance of marriage ties, Leach (1957) drew attention to the importance of economic factors in the integration of affinally-linked corporate descent groups, concluding that such integration as did occur was due largely to the delayed payment of bride price. The existence of this debt had the effect of consolidating the weak affinal ties, for the debtor group was economically bound to the bride-giving group. Although it has been shown above that the solidary ties between any affinally-linked Yąnomamö descent groups are due largely to military, marital and economic obligations, the problem of the lack of solidarity between agnatically related descent groups has not been satisfactorily explained. The instability of relationships between agnatic Yąnomamö corporate descent groups can be reduced to

121 having such estates, particularly in those societies to
613 which real estate is totally irrelevant. The Yąnomamö
562 corporate estate consists entirely of rights in disposing
421 of female members belonging to that corporation. As such, males and females have different kinds of shares in the corporation. Males, on the average, tend to inherit more rights, while females tend to inherit more duties and obli-
[423] gations. Land to the Yąnomamö is not a scarce item, as they
[341] are pioneer slash-and-burn horticulturists expanding into
[424] virgin territory.[1] Myths, names and ritual functions do not comprise elements in these corporations.[2]

121 It would seem important to distinguish between lineal descent corporations which control property and those which do not, as Befu and Plotnicov (1962) have done. A further distinction, however, seems warranted on the basis of the data presented here: between <u>societies</u> having any corporate groups that control real property and societies that have corporate descent groups, none of which have control over property as their estate. The possession of real estate tends to reinforce the lineality of corporate descent groups in both dogma and composition,[3] and invites the addition of

[184]

[1]This is true of the Mavaca Basin Yąnomamö. Elsewhere the Yąnomamö may not be pioneers, but land is not scare in those areas either.

[2]I am aware that the Yąnomamö have lineally transmitted totems; these have nothing to do with the descent group recruitment or its estate.

[3]See Meggitt, 1965, for an excellent account of the relationship of agnatic kinship, real property, and lineage

484 752 The jungle provides a number of hazards to the barefoot traveler in that most species of palm have long, sharp spines protruding from their trunks or leaf stems. The most common and recurrent injury the Yąnomamö sustain is thorns in the feet. A party of ten men can rarely travel an hour without one of them stopping to extract a thorn from his foot. This is always accompanied by hisses and clicks of pain on the part of the victim, who gouges the thorn out with either an arrow point or another thorn. Their feet have thick calluses on them, but because the trails frequently cross streams and swamps, the calluses soften and are easily pierced by thorns.

Another, but rarer, hazard is snakes.[2] There are always a few cases of snake bite in each village every year, although few of them are fatal. Most snake-bite victims recover from the wound with no ill side effects. I treated two cases of snake bite that were like this. But a few bites are severe enough to cause the loss of a limb. One of my better acquaintances, a young man of some thirty years, lost a leg because of a snake bite when he was about fifteen years old, and will spend the rest of his life hopping on one leg, a form of locomotion he has mastered so thoroughly that he almost manages to keep up with the group when they visit other villages.

484 221 623 132 Most of the intervillage traveling is done from September through April, the dry season. For the remainder of the year the trails, or substantial portions of them, are underwater. At this time the rains are frequent and heavy, and the small streams that can be easily crossed on foot in the dry season become impassable torrents. Small lakes replace the marshy low ground, and communication between villages all but ceases. As the Yąnomamö are an inland people and avoid locating their villages near large streams, all travel is done on foot, and each village becomes an isolated entity at the peak of the wet season (June).[3] 484 499 If the group must travel, it will make simple vine and pole bridges over the smaller streams. A pair of slender poles is stuck into the river and crossed to form an X-frame. Vines are used to lash the poles together where they intersect, and another pole is laid from the bank to the X-frame, also secured by vines. Then another pair of poles is stuck into the stream and lashed to form another X-frame. The long pole is then extended out further from the bank, and so on, until the stream is bridged. A vine railing is attached to the protruding members of the X-frames. The bridges usually last only a short time. The first heavy rain will swell the stream and the current will wash it away.

323 TECHNOLOGY Much of Yąnomamö technology is like the pole-and-vine bridge: crude, but very effective, and not destined to last for any great period of time. The only durable artifact produced is a crude, poorly fired clay pot. It is nearly an inch thick at the bottom and tapers to almost nothing at the brim. Consequently, it breaks very [562] easily. For this reason, women, regarded as clumsy, are rarely allowed to touch or handle them. When the clay pots are used, the men do the cooking, as, for example, during feasts. The pot is made by the coil technique: The untempered clay is kneaded to the proper consistency by hand, rolled into long, slender ropes, and these, in turn, placed on top of each other to form a continuous rope of clay. The coils are then scraped flat so that the interior and exterior of the pot are smooth. The conical-shaped pot is allowed to dry in the shade, then fired by placing brush and wood over it. The end product is

[165] [2]Two percent of all adult deaths are due to snake bite; 54 percent are due to malaria, and other epidemic diseases (Chagnon 1966) and 24 percent of adult males die in warfare.

[361] [3]The Yąnomamö began moving their villages out to navigable rivers after 1955. Up to that time there was only one village, Mahekodo-teri, located on a navigable portion of the Orinoco River.

794 825 179 123 126 I, in effect, was capturing the *noreshi* of the child: A photograph was called *noreshi*.[13] Tape recordings, in contrast, were not considered to be harmful. If anything, they enjoyed having me record their music and discussions, and always demanded that I play them back for everyone to hear. The word used to describe a recording was *no ubudibö*, the part of the soul that wanders in the jungle after the body is cremated. In short, only the *noreshi* aspect of the soul is vulnerable.

766 889 153 183 TREATMENT OF THE DEAD If a person dies in an epidemic, his body, along with those of the others who died, is placed on a tree platform and allowed to decay. After several months, an old man is appointed to strip the remaining decayed flesh from the bones and the bones are then cremated. The Yanomamö fear the smoke that is produced when a body is cremated, and since epidemics are feared, they do not take a chance on contaminating the houses, implements, and persons with the smoke produced by the burning bodies.

764 783 562 858 Under normal circumstances, the body of the deceased is placed on a pyre of logs, covered with additional wood, and allowed to burn until nothing but the large bones are left. The burning takes place in the village, usually in the afternoon. The children and women leave, as they are susceptible to contamination by the smoke. They all bathe carefully to wash off any possible contamination. Even the weapons are washed.

After the coals are cool enough to handle, the relatives sift the ashes meticulously with shallow, loosely woven baskets, collecting every bit of bone they can find. The charcoal of the wood is burned, lest a small piece of bone be mixed in with it. The accumulated bones are then ground in a log mortar, hollowed out by means of alternate burning and chopping. These logs are about 4 feet long and 6 to 8 inches in diameter. 237 531 562 For grinding the bones of a male, white buzzard down is usually attached around the circumference of the mortar, and curved lines painted on the mortar with red pigment. The mortars used for females are not decorated as elaborately, but usually have decorative fibers of a palm tree, the kind used by women to decorate their perforated ears. Circles and dots are painted on the mortars of females.

531 The charred bones of the dead are placed, a few at a time, into the mortar and a long, slender pole is used as the pestle. These poles are about 6 feet long, 2 or 3 inches in diameter, and bear painted decorations. The bones are crushed into a black powder by a young man, while the relatives of the deceased sit around the mortar and weep profusely. The ground ashes are then transferred to hollow gourds through a small hole and sealed with wax and buzzard down. A little is left in the mortar and eaten, mixed with boiled plantain soup, on the day of the ceremony. The mortar is always burned after a ceremony.

769 266 About a year later, the rest of the ashes are eaten during a feast, again mixed with boiled plantain soup. Occasionally, they will deliberately save some of the ashes, especially ashes of those who were killed in raids, making use of them for a number of ceremonies. Before each attempt at getting revenge, the raiders eat the ashes of their slain kinsman. This puts them into the appropriate state of rage for the business of killing enemies.

---

[13] Many informants gave a more pragmatic explanation of their fear of the camera. They did not want to be reminded of their dead kinsman, and if I had a photograph of the person, this would be an extremely offensive reminder to his relatives that their loved one was dead.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

When I insisted that she share her food with the child, he ate it ravenously. In short, she was letting the baby die slowly of starvation. I have similar accounts from missionaries who have also witnessed cases such as this.

Male babies are preferred because they will grow up to be warriors and hunters. Most men make known their wishes to have a son—even to the point of insinuating that the wife ought to deliver a male or suffer the consequences. This is always done in a subtle way, usually by displaying signs of anger or resentment at the thought of having a daughter that constantly eats without being potentially an economic asset or guardian of the village. Many women will kill a female baby just to avoid disappointing their husbands. The Yąnomamö also practice abortion in a very crude but effective way. The pregnant woman will lie on her back and have a friend jump on her belly to rupture the amnion. Sometimes abortions are effected because the woman does not want to kill the baby after it is born. In other cases a man will order his wife to abort if he suspects that somebody else conceived the child.

Several techniques are used to kill a newborn child. The most common method is to strangle it with a vine so as not to touch it physically. Another common method is to place a stick across the child's neck and stand on both ends of it until it chokes. In some cases the child is not given the stimulus to breathe and is simply abandoned. Finally, some women throw the child against a tree or on the ground and just abandon it without checking to see if it was killed by the injuries sustained. One of the New Tribes Missionaries discovered a female baby in 1964 that had been discarded in this fashion and brought her home with him. The baby's face was badly bruised on one side, but she survived. The missionary subsequently adopted her legally and is raising her in England.

The demographic result of the Yąnomamö infanticide practices is that there is a shortage of females.[13] This shortage of females, however slight, assumes greater proportions for a number of culturally determined reasons. That is, the shortage of women is even greater than statistics alone imply because of the practice of polygyny and because of taboos relating to sexual intercourse.

The village of Patanowä-teri, for example, has 122 males and only 90 females (see Table 3-3). But many (about 25 percent) of the politically important men in the village have two or more wives. Hence, many men have no wives. Polygyny, therefore, increases the women shortage because the available women are distributed unequally.

In addition to this, the Yąnomamö have taboos against intercourse when a woman is pregnant or is nursing a child. The taboo is by no means followed to the strict letter, since children are nursed for three years or more—some men sheepishly admit having coitus with a lactating wife. Rerebawä, whose youngest child is about a year old, told me that he recently tried to persuade his wife to make love. He added: "She told me to go take some drugs and chant to my forest spirits; she is still 'stingy' with her vagina." Hence there is considerable concern within the village over the acquisition and possession of

[13]The frequency of female infanticide must be considerably higher than the statistics in Table 3-3 imply, since warfare results in the death of more men than women. This shows up in the age and sex distribution: There are more males in the younger age categories than females because of the infanticide preferences. As the males get older, however, they are more liable to death in warfare, resulting in a fairly even distribution of males and females in the thirty- to forty-year age interval. Finally, there are more old women than old men, also reflecting the higher male mortality due to warfare. I have published more substantial data on Yąnomamö demography in Neel and Chagnon, 1968.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

of other villages—such alliances are stabilized by exchanges of women between the partners, a breach of the prescriptive marriage rules. It is for this reason that such a large discrepancy exists between the ideal behavior and the actual practice, as noted in Table 2.[18]

Division of Labor and Daily Social Life

The daily activities and general social life are not as circumscribed by rules and regulations as would appear from the foregoing discussion. In fact, one first has the impression that chaos rather than order reigns over the daily activities of the village members![19] Thus, while ideal rules about behavior definitely exist, individuals have a great deal of freedom to manipulate their behavior in such a way that they are not unduly encumbered by them. Most of the run-of-the-mill activities of daily life are not characterized by inflexible prescriptions regarding proper behavior.

MALE-FEMALE DIVISION There are a number of distinctions based on status differences that are important in daily life. Perhaps the most conspicuous and most important is the distinction between males and females.

Yąnomamö society is decidedly masculine. As was discussed earlier, there is a definite preference to have male children, resulting in a higher incidence of female infanticide as opposed to male infanticide. Female children assume duties and responsibilities in the household long before their brothers are obliged to participate in useful domestic tasks. For the most part, little girls are obliged to tend their younger brothers and sisters, although they are also expected to help their mothers in other chores such as cooking, hauling water, and collecting firewood. By the time girls have reached puberty they have already learned that their world is decidedly less attractive than that of their brothers.

As members of local descent groups, girls have almost no voice in the decisions reached by their agnates concerning their marriage. They are largely pawns to be disposed of by their kinsmen, and their wishes are given very little consideration. In many cases, the girl has been promised to a man long before she reaches puberty, and in some cases her husband actually raises her for part of her childhood. In short, they do not participate as equals in the political affairs of the corporate kinship group and seem to inherit most of the duties without enjoying many of the privileges.

Marriage does not enhance the status of the girl, for her duties as wife require her to assume difficult and laborious tasks too menial to be executed by the men. For the most part these include the incessant demands for firewood and drinking water, particularly the former. Women spend several hours each day scouring the neighborhood

[18]Reducing kinship usage to the logical extremes to which the Yąnomamö take it, there really is no discrepancy between theory and practice, except in the case of incest. When new villages enter into contact for the first time, their respective headmen call each other *shoriwä* (brother-in-law). The first exchanges between the groups usually involve the children of these men. The children, of course, stand in marriageable relationship to each other because the children of brothers-in-law can, by the prescriptive definitions, marry.

[19]Many fieldworkers do not begin to see the patterns of behavior until they have spent months of intensive contact with their subjects. I was convinced, after five or six months, that there were almost no guidelines for behavior. A part of the difficulty resulted from the language barrier. The patterns began to emerge only after about six months, and only then could I begin asking pertinent questions about many features of social organization.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

fidelity. Many men, however, show their ferocity by meting out serious punishment to their wives for even minor offenses. It is not uncommon for a man to injure his errant wife seriously; and some men have even killed wives.

Women expect this kind of treatment and many of them measure their husband's concern in terms of the frequency of minor beatings they sustain. I overheard two young women discussing each other's scalp scars. One of them commented that the other's husband must really care for her since he has beaten her on the head so frequently!

A woman usually depends for protection on her brothers, who will defend her against a cruel husband. If a man is too brutal to a wife, her brothers may take the woman away from him and give her to another man. It is largely for this reason that women abhor the possibility of being married off to men in distant villages; they know that their brothers cannot protect them under these circumstances. Women who have married a male cross-cousin have an easier life, for they are related to their husbands by cognatic ties of kinship as well as by marriage. Kąobawä, for example, is related to Bahimi as FaSiSo, and their marital relationship is very tranquil by Yąnomamö standards. He does beat Bahimi on occasion, but never cruelly. It is considered good to beat a wife every once in a while just to show your concern for her.

A young man in Monou-teri shot and killed his wife a few years before I conducted my fieldwork. Even while I was there, a man in one of the villages shot his wife in the stomach with a barbed arrow. Considerable internal injury resulted when the arrow was removed. The missionaries had her sent out by airplane to the Territorial capital for surgery. Her wound had gotten infected, and the girl was near death by the time the incident came to their attention. Another man chopped his wife on the arm with a machete; the missionaries in that village feared that the woman would lose the use of her hand because some of the tendons to her fingers were severed. A fight involving a case of infidelity took place in one of the villages just before I left the field. The male culprit was killed in the club fight, and the recalcitrant wife had both her ears cut off by her enraged husband. A number of other women had their ears badly mutilated by angry husbands. The women wear sticks of cane in their pierced ear lobes; these are easily grabbed by the husband. A few men jerked these so hard that they tore their wives' ear lobes open.

It is not difficult to understand, then, why Yąnomamö women in general have such a vindictive and caustic attitude toward the external world. By the time a woman is thirty years old she has "lost her shape" and has developed a rather unpleasant disposition. Women tend to seek refuge and consolation in each other's company, sharing their misery with their peers.

A woman gains a measure of respect when she becomes old. By then she has adult children who care for her and treat her kindly. Old women also have a unique position in the world of intervillage warfare and politics. They are immune from the incursions of raiders and can go from one village to another with complete disregard for personal danger. In this connection they are employed as messengers and, on some occasions, as the recoverers of bodies. If a man is killed near the village of an enemy, an old woman from the slain man's village is permitted to recover his body.

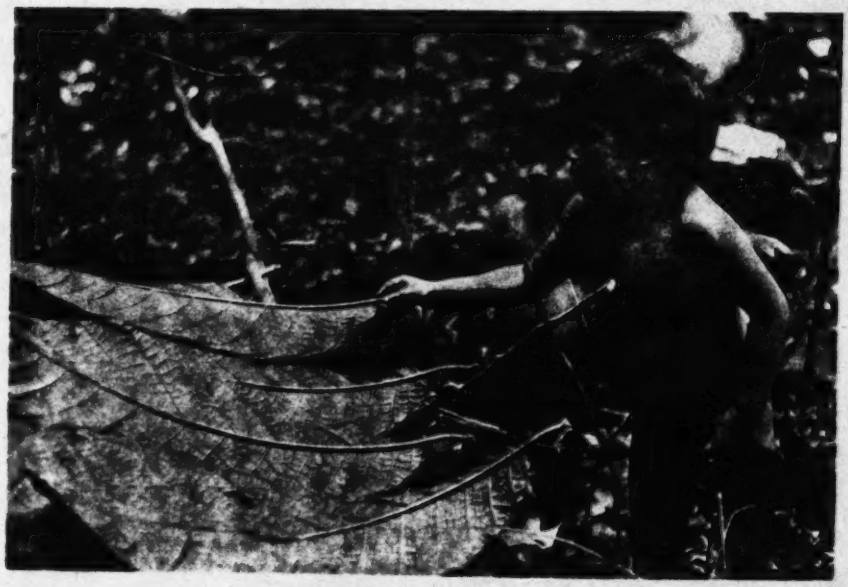
Still, the women have one method by which they can exercise a measure of influence over village politics. All women fear being abducted by raiders and always leave the village with this anxiety at the back of their minds. Women always bring their

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

Women always bring their children with them, particularly younger children, so that if they are abducted, the child will not starve to death because of the separation of the mother. They are therefore concerned with the political behavior of their men and occasionally goad them into taking action against some possible enemy by caustically accusing the men of cowardice. This has the effect of establishing the village's reputation for ferocity, reducing the possibility of raiders abducting the women while they are out collecting firewood or garden produce. The men cannot stand being chided by the women in this fashion, and are forced to take action if the women unite against them.

CHILD-ADULT DIVISION Despite the fact that children of both sexes spend much of their time with their mothers, the boys alone are treated with considerable indulgence by their fathers from an early age. Thus, the distinction between male and female status develops early in the socialization process, and the boys are quick to learn their favored position with respect to girls. They are encouraged to be "fierce" and are rarely punished by their parents for inflicting blows on them or on the hapless girls in the village. Kaobawä, for example, lets Ariwari beat him on the face and head to express his anger and temper, laughing and commenting on his ferocity. Although Ariwari is only about four years old, he has already learned that the appropriate response to a flash of anger is to strike someone with his hand or with an object, and it is not uncommon for him to give his father a healthy smack in the face whenever something displeases him. He is frequently goaded into hitting his father by teasing, being rewarded by gleeful cheers of assent from his mother and from the other adults in the household.

Fig. 3–7. Ariwari, Kaobawä's favorite son, building a make-believe house while camping with his father. His "sister" (father's brother's daughter) looks on.



11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

When Kąobawä's group travels, Ariwari emulates his father by copying his activities on a child's scale. For example, he erects a temporary hut from small sticks and discarded leaves and plays happily in his own camp (see Fig. 3–7). His sisters, however, are pressed into more practical labor and help their mother do useful tasks. Still, the young girls are given some freedom to play at being adults and have their moments of fun with their mothers.

But a girl's childhood ends sooner than a boy's. The game of playing house fades imperceptibly into a constant responsibility to help mother. By the time a girl is ten years old or so, she has become an economic asset to the mother and spends a great deal of time working. Little boys, by contrast, spend hours playing among themselves and are able to prolong their childhood into their late teens if they so wish. By that time a girl has married, and may even have a child or two.

A girl's transition to womanhood is obvious because of its physiological manifestations. At first menses (*yobömou*) Yąnomamö girls are confined to their houses and hidden behind a screen of leaves. Their old cotton garments are discarded and replaced by new ones manufactured by their mothers or by older female friends. During this week of confinement, the girl is fed by her relatives; her food must be eaten by means of a stick, as she is not allowed to come into contact with it in any other fashion. She must also scratch herself with another set of sticks. The Yąnomamö word for menstruation translates literally as "squatting" (*mo*), and that fairly accurately describes what pubescent females (and adult women) do during menstruation. Yąnomamö women do not employ tampons; they simply remain inactive during menstruation, squatting on their haunches most of the time. After her puberty confinement, a girl is eligible to begin life as a wife and take up residence with her husband.

Males, on the other hand, do not have their transition into manhood marked by a ceremony. Nevertheless, one can usually tell when a boy is attempting to enter the world of men. The most conspicuous sign is his anger when others call him by his name. When the adults in the village cease using his personal name, the young man has achieved some sort of masculine adult status. Young men are always very touchy about their names and they, more than anyone else, take quick offense when hearing their names mentioned. The Yąnomamö constantly employ teknonymy when a kinship usage is ambiguous. Thus, someone may wish to refer to Kąobawä in a conversation, but the kinship term appropriate to the occasion might not distinguish him from his several brothers. Then, Kąobawä will be referred to as "father of Ariwari." However, when Ariwari gets older, he will attempt to put a stop to this in an effort to establish his status as an adult. A young man has been recognized as an adult when people no longer use his name in teknonymous references. Still, the transition is not abrupt, and it is not marked by a recognizable point in time.

Finally, the children differ from adults in their susceptibility to supernatural hazards. A great deal of Yąnomamö sorcery and mythological references to harmful magic focuses on children as the target of malevolence. Yąnomamö shamans are constantly sending evil spirits (*Hekura*) to enemy villages. There, they secretly attack and devour the vulnerable portion of the childrens' souls (*noreshi*), bringing about sickness and death. These same shamans spend an equal amount of time warding off the dangerous spirits sent by their enemies. Children are vulnerable because their souls are not firmly established within their physical beings, and can wander out of the body almost at will. The

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

supplies soak the new leaves in water and add ashes from the hearth to the wad. Men, women, and children chew tobacco and all are addicted to it. Once there was a shortage of tobacco in Kaobawä's village and I was plagued for a week by early morning visitors who requested permission to collect my cigarette butts in order to make a wad of chewing tobacco. Normally, if anyone is short of tobacco, he can request a share of someone else's already chewed wad, or simply borrow the entire wad when its owner puts it down somewhere. Tobacco is so important to them that their word for "poverty" translates as "being without tobacco." I frequently justified my reluctance to give away possessions on the basis of my poverty. Many of them responded by spitting their tobacco into their hand and handing it to me.

Work begins as soon as breakfast is completed; the Yanomamö like to take advantage of the morning coolness. Within an hour after it is light the men are in their gardens clearing brush, felling large trees, transplanting plantain cuttings, burning off dead timber, or planting new crops of cotton, maize, sweet potatoes, yuca, taro, or the like, depending on the season. They work until 10:30 A.M., retiring because it is too humid and hot by that time to continue with their strenuous work. Most of them bathe in the stream before returning to their hammocks for a rest and a meal.

The women usually accompany their husbands to the garden and occupy themselves by collecting firewood or helping with planting and weeding. In this way the men are sure that their families are safe and that the women are not having affairs with other men.

The children spend a great deal of time exploring the wonders of the plant and animal life around them and are accomplished biologists at an early age. Most twelve-year-old boys can, for example, name twenty species of bees and give the anatomical or behavioral reasons for their distinctions—and they know which ones produce the best honey. An eight-year-old girl brought me a tiny egg-like structure on one occasion and asked me to watch it with her. Presently it cracked open and numerous baby cockroaches poured out, while she described the intimate details of the reproductive process to me.

The younger children stay close to their mothers, but the older ones have considerable freedom to wander about the garden at play. Young boys hunt for lizards with miniature bows and featherless arrows. If they can capture one alive, they bring it back to the village and tie a string around it. The string is anchored to a stick in the village clearing and the little boys chase it gleefully, shooting scores of tiny arrows at it (see Fig. 3–8). Since lizards are very quick, and little boys are poor shots, the target practice can last for hours. Usually, however, the fun terminates when an older boy decides to make an end to the unhappy lizard and kills it with his adult-size arrows, showing off his archery skills to the disgruntled small fry.

Little girls learn very quickly that it is a man's world, for they soon must assume much of the responsibility for tending their younger siblings, hauling water and firewood, and in general helping their busy mothers.

Most of the people rest in their hammocks during the heat of midday, although they will collect fruits and other wild foods from the surrounding area, if any are in season. They avoid being in the direct rays of the midday sun.

If the men return to their gardening, they do so about 4:00 P.M., working until sundown. Otherwise, they gather in small groups around the village and take hallucinogenic drugs in the late afternoon shadows, chanting to the mountain demons as the

At the evening meal he refused to take a portion of the meat so that the others could have more. Later in the evening, he appeared at my hut begging for a can of sardines to satisfy his hunger for meat. He preferred to go hungry rather than risk the onus of being accused of poor marksmanship or stinginess.

Both sexes participate in the cooking, although the women do the greater share of it. Food preparation is not elaborate and rarely requires much labor, time, or paraphernalia. Spices are never used, although the salty ashes of a particular kind of tree are sometimes mixed with water to form a condiment of sorts. The food is dunked into the salty liquid and eaten.

Everyone eats in his hammock using his fingers for utensils. Some meals cannot be eaten from a reclining position, so the members of the family squat in a circle around the common dish. For example, large quantities of tiny fish are cooked by wrapping them in leaves and cooking them in the hot coals. When the fish are done, the package is spread open, and everyone shares its contents.

Animals are never skinned before cooking. They are merely put over the fire after their entrails have been removed, and roasted, head, fur, claws, and all. Most of the fur is singed off in the process of cooking. The animal is dismembered by hand. The head, particularly the head of a monkey, is highly prized because the brain is considered a delicacy. The most common meat is monkey, of which there are several varieties, so that this delicacy is enjoyed rather frequently by the Yąnomamö.

By the time supper is over it is nearly dark. The fires are prepared for the evening; if someone has allowed his own fire to go out during the day, he simply borrows two glowing sticks from a neighbor and rekindles his own hearth. The entrances to the village are sealed off with dry brush so that prowlers can not enter without raising an alarm. Before retiring to their hammocks, the Yąnomamö first sit on them and wipe the bottoms of their bare feet together. This rubs off most of the debris that has accumulated on them during the course of the day. Everyone sleeps naked and as close to the fire as possible. Despite the inevitable last-minute visiting, things are usually quiet in the village by the time it is dark.

Things are not always quiet after dark. If anyone in the village is sick, a shaman will chant to the malevolent spirits most of the night to exorcise them. Or, should anyone be mourning a dead kinsman, he or she will sob and wail long after the others have fallen asleep. Occasionally, a fight will break out between a husband and wife, and soon everybody in the village will be screaming, expressing opinions on the dispute. The shouting may continue sporadically for hours, dying down only to break out anew as someone gets a fresh insight into the problem. Once in a while someone gives a long, loud speech voicing his opinion on the world in general. Those who are interested may add their own comments, but the audience usually grumbles about the noise and falls asleep.

Status Differences and Activities

Daily activities, except those concerning gardening and visiting, do not vary much from season to season. Much of the variation that does occur is a function of one's age or sex, as was shown above.

*628 722 241 562 581 582 The beleaguered partner may be obliged to remain in the village of his host for a year or longer, approximately the length of time required to establish a new plantation and productive base from which an independent existence is possible. Twice in the recent history of Kaobawä's group they were driven from their gardens by more powerful enemies and were forced to take refuge in the village of an ally. In each case the group remained with the ally for a year or so, moving away only after their new garden began producing. In both cases, the hosts demanded and received a number of women from Kaobawä's group without reciprocating in kind, a prerogative they exercised from their temporary position of strength. The longer the group takes advantage of a hosts' protection, the higher is the cost in terms of women, so visitors always make an attempt to establish their gardens as quickly as possible and move into them as soon as they begin producing. Without allies, therefore, the members of a village would either have to remain at their single garden and sustain the attacks of their enemies or disband into several smaller groups and join larger villages on a permanent basis, losing many of their women to their protectors. The jungle simply does not produce enough wild foods to sustain larger groups, and the threat of warfare is such that smaller groups would soon be discovered by their enemies and exterminated.

Because of the ever-present risk of being driven from one's garden, therefore, no Yąnomamö village can continue to exist as a sovereign entity without establishing alliances with other groups. Warfare is attended by a bellicose ideology which asserts that strong villages should take advantage of weaker ones and coerce them out of women; to prevent this, all villages should therefore behave as if they were strong. Thus, the military threat creates a situation in which intervillage alliance is desirable, but at the same time spawns a military ideology that inhibits the formation of such alliances: Allies need but cannot trust each other. They are obliged to behave aggressively in order to display their respective strength.

*628 438 574 581 582 602 Alliances between villages are the product of a developmental sequence that involves casual trading, mutual feasting, and finally the exchange of women. The most intimate allies are those who, in addition to trading and feasting, exchange women. Any developing alliance may stabilize at the trading or feasting stage without proceeding to the woman-exchange phase. These are weak alliances, but serve to limit the degree of war that might possibly obtain between the villages so related: The Yąnomamö tend to avoid attacking those villages with which they trade and feast, unless some specific incident, such as the abduction of a woman, provokes them. Allies that are linked by trade and feasting ties, for example, rarely accuse each other of practicing harmful magic. Allies bound to each other by affinal kinship ties, however, are more interdependent because they are under obligation to each other to continue to exchange women. It is, in fact, by the exchange of women that independent villages extend kinship ties to each other.

*628 562 581 582 Members of allied villages are usually reluctant to take the final step in alliance formation and cede women to their partners, for they are always worried that the latter might not reciprocate as promised. This attitude is especially conspicuous in smaller villages, for their larger partners in defense pressure them into demonstrating their solidarity by ceding women; the strong can and do coerce the weak in Yąnomamö politics. The weak, therefore, are compelled to exaggerate their strength by bluff and intimidation and by attempting in general to appear to be stronger, militarily, than they really are, thereby hoping to convince their partners that they are equals, capable of an independent

11: Chagnon E-5 ((1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

existence. By so doing, they also inform their partners that any attempt to coerce them out of women will be met with the appropriate reaction, such as a chest-pounding duel or club fight. Nevertheless, each ally expects to gain women in the alliance and enters it with this in mind; and each hopes to gain more women than it cedes in return.

Hence, in order for an occasional nervous meeting of groups of men from different villages to evolve into a stable intervillage alliance based on the reciprocal exchange of women, the long and difficult road of feasting and trading must be traversed. Suspicion must give way to relative confidence, and this must develop into reciprocal feasting during the dry season. Only then has the intervillage relationship reached a point where the partners begin ceding women to each other; and even then, it is done reluctantly.

This is, however, only the ideal pattern in the development of an alliance. Rarely does it develop far enough to reach the stage where women change hands, particularly if the two villages concerned are of approximately the same military strength. Fights and arguments over women or food develop, and the principals withdraw temporarily on semihostile terms, perhaps attempting a rapprochement sometime in the future. Or, if the principals are obviously different military potential, the stronger of the two will coerce its weaker partner into ceding women early in the alliance development, taking advantage of its own military strength, thus altering the course of alliance development in the opposite direction.

Whatever the specific developmental sequence leading to the woman-exchange phase, the milieu within which these developments take place is not conducive to the establishment of warm ties of friendship. Each of the principals attempts to demonstrate his own sovereignty in order to convince the other that he does not really require political alliance to keep his enemies in check. This is accomplished by bragging about past military victories and fierceness in past club fights and chest-pounding duels, and by insinuating that one's group is always on the verge of exploding into a force so great that no combination of allies could overcome its terrible might. The smaller the village and more obvious its vulnerability, the greater is the pressure to insinuate or to demonstrate this potential.

Political maneuvering in this milieu is both a tricky and potentially hazardous undertaking. Each principal in the negotiation must establish the credibility of his own threats, while discovering the point at which his partner's bluff will dissolve abruptly into action; he must discover the point beyond which he must not goad his ally, lest he himself is prepared to suffer the possibly violent outcome. It is a politics of brinkmanship, a form of political behavior in which each negotiator is compelled to expose his opposite's threats as bluffs at the risk of inciting him to violence—a club fight, immediately and honorably, or, later and treacherously, a feast in which the hosts descend on their guests to kill their men and abduct their women.

Trading and Feasting in Alliance Formation

Because an ally is not beyond taking advantage of his weaker partner, especially when the alliance is just developing, there is very little in the way of natural attraction to encourage the two groups to visit each other. Considerations of pride and canons of ferocity preclude obvious attempts to develop stable and predictable alliances and military

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanomama SQ18

a local shortage of the item in order to have to rely on an ally for it, giving sufficient cause to visit them.

Often the specialization is less individualized than in the case of clay pot manufacture. Kaobawä's group, for example, exports cotton yarn to one ally, but imports it from another. The exported cotton frequently is brought back in the form of manufactured hammocks, the importer merely contributing labor to the process. In some cases the shortages are merely seasonal; Kaobawä's group may import cotton from a particular ally at one time of the year, but export it at another. Most of the trade, however, involves items that are readily manufactured by or raised by any group, underscoring the fact that trade is the stimulus to visit. Food does not enter the trading system, although hospitality dictates that it must be given to friendly groups. Occasionally, a village will run short of plantains because of a particularly long hot spell, and its members may visit an ally to borrow food to last a week or so. This hospitality is usually reciprocated, but it is not a part of the trading network.

Alliances between villages may stabilize at any one of three points: sporadic reciprocal trading, mutual feasting, or reciprocal women exchange. These are cumulative levels in the sense that the third phase implies the first two: Allies that exchange women also feast and trade with each other. Likewise, allies that merely feast together also trade, but do not exchange women. At the lower end of this scale of solidarity lie those villages with which one fights to kill, while at the upper end are those villages from whom one's group has recently separated. Frequently, the scale is circular rather than linear: A village's mortal enemy is the group from which it has recently split. By way of example, Kaobawä's group trades sporadically with the Makorima-teri, Daiyari-teri, Widokaiya-teri, Mahekodo-teri, and Iyawei-teri. These are fairly weak alliances and even permit limited fighting. His group has more intimate ties with the Reyaboböwei-teri and Mõmariböwei-teri, with whom it feasts regularly. The alliance with the Reyaboböwei-teri has even reached the point at which they are exchanging women with each other. Finally, at the other end of the scale, Kaobawä's group is at war with the Iwahikoroba-teri, Mõwaraoba-teri, and Patanowä-teri. The first two of these groups are historically unrelated to Kaobawä's group, although they have a common history with two of his staunchest allies, the Reyaboböwei-teri and Mõmaribowei-teri, from whom they separated in the past. The Patanowä-teri are related to Kaobawä and his followers, as was shown in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, they are bitter enemies and are at present raiding each other.

Although there is no rigid geographical correlation of the village settlement pattern to the degree of alliance solidarity, neighboring villages usually are at least on trading terms and are not actively conducting war on each other. Should war develop between neighbors, one of the two principals will abandon its site and move to a new location. Whether the ties between neighboring villages will be one of blood, marriage exchange, reciprocal feasting, or casual trading depends on a large number of factors, particularly on village size, current warfare situation with respect to more distant groups, and the precise historical ties between the neighboring villages. Whatever the nature of the ties between neighbors, each strives to maintain its sovereignty and independence from the others.

The Yanomamö do not openly regard trade as a mechanism the ulterior function of which is to bring people repeatedly together, thus establishing an amicable basis from

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

If such a duel is escalated, it usually develops into a side-slapping contest. Occasionally, the combatants will sue for the use of machetes and axes, but this is rare. If machetes are used, the object of the contest still remains the same: Injure your opponent seriously enough so that he will withdraw from the contest, but try not to draw blood. Hence, opponents strike each other with only the flat of the blade when they resort to machetes.

In some areas the Yąnomamö modify the chest-pounding duel in another way: The opponents hold rocks in their clenched fists and strike their adversaries on the chest with an even more stunning blow. They try not to let the stone itself touch the flesh of the man they are fighting. Even without the use of stones, however, they are able to deliver their blows with such force that some of the participants cough up blood for days after having been in a duel.

Club fights represent the next level of violence. These can take place both within and between villages. Most of the club fights result from arguments over women, but a few of them develop out of disputes associated with food theft. Dikawä, a young man about twenty years old, came home one day and discovered a bunch of eating bananas his father, about fifty-five years old, had hung up in his house, above his hearth, to ripen in the smoke. Dikawä, however, ate a number of them without his father's permission. When his father discovered the theft, he ripped a pole out of his house and began clubbing Dikawä. Dikawä armed himself with a similar club and attacked his father, precipitating a general melee that soon involved most of the men in the village, each taking the side of the father or son, as they saw fit. In brawls such as these, many individuals join in the fighting just to keep the sides even; if a group is badly outnumbered, they will be joined by friends whose sense of fairness stimulates them to take sides, no matter what the issue is. The net result of the above fight was a number of lacerated skulls, bashed fingers, and sore shoulders. The contestants try to hit each other on the top of the head, but when the fight gets out of hand, the participants swing wildly and rarely hit their opponents on the skull. More frequently, the blow lands on the shoulder or arm.

The clubs used in these fights are, ideally, 8 to 10 feet long. They are very wiry, quite heavy, and deliver a tremendous wallop. In general shape and dimensions, they resemble pool cues, but are nearly twice as long. The club is held at the thin end, which is frequently sharpened to a long point in case the fighting escalates to spear thrusting, in which case the club is inverted and used as a pike.

Most duels start between two men, usually after one of them has been caught *in flagrante* trysting with the other's wife. The enraged husband challenges his opponent to strike him on the head with a club. He holds his own club vertically, leans against it and exposes his head for his opponent to strike. After he has sustained a blow on the head, he can then deliver one on the culprit's skull. But as soon as blood starts to flow, almost everybody rips a pole out of the house frame and joins in the fighting, supporting one or the other of the contestants.

Needless to say, the tops of most men's heads are covered with long, ugly scars of which their bearers are immensely proud. Some of them, in fact, keep their head cleanly shaved on top to display these scars, rubbing red pigment on their bare scalps to define them more precisely. Viewed from the top, the skull of an accomplished man of forty years looks like a road map, for it is criss-crossed by as many as twenty large scars (see

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

Although few raids are initiated solely with the intention of capturing women, this is always a desired side benefit. A few wars, however, are started with the intention of abducting women. I visited a village in Brazil in 1967 that had a critical shortage of women. A group of missionaries had moved into this village a few years earlier and learned of the treachery by which the group managed to obtain a number of their women. One of them gave me this account. The headman of the group organized a raiding party to abduct women from a distant group. They went there and told these people that they had machetes and cooking pots from the foreigners, who prayed to a spirit that gave such items in answer to the prayers. They then volunteered to teach these people how to pray. When the men knelt down and bowed their heads, the raiders attacked them with their machetes and killed them. They captured their women and fled.

Treachery of this kind, the *nomohoni*, is the ultimate form of violence. Kaobawä's group suffered a massacre in 1950, as I have mentioned earlier, but the treachery in this case was in revenge for a murder. Still, their assailants attempted to abduct women after the objectives of their treachery were accomplished. Had it not been for their greed to capture women, the massacre would have been even more complete. Many escaped because the assailants turned their attention to the women.

Generally, however, the desire to abduct women does not lead to the initiation of hostilities between groups that have had no history of mutual raiding in the past. New wars usually develop when charges of sorcery are leveled against the members of a different group. Once raiding has begun between two villages, however, the raiders all hope to acquire women if the circumstances are such that they can flee without being discovered. If they catch a man and his wife at some distance from the village, they will more than likely take the woman after they kill her husband. If, however, the raiders are near the village, they may flee without dragging a captured woman along, as the body of their victim will be discovered quickly and pursuit will be immediate. Hence, they do not take a chance on hindering their flight by dragging a reluctant captive with them. A captured woman is raped by all the men in the raiding party and, later, by the men in the village who wish to do so but did not participate in the raid. She is then given to one of the men as a wife. If the captured woman is related to her captors, she is not raped.

Most wars are merely a prolongation of earlier hostilities, stimulated by revenge motives. The first causes of hostilities are usually sorcery, murders, or club fights over women in which someone is badly injured or killed. Occasionally, food theft involving related villages also precipitates raiding. This was the cause of the first raids between Kaobawä's group and the Patanowä-teri; they split from each other after a series of club fights over women. Each group made a new garden and returned periodically to the old one to collect peach-palm fruit, a crop that continues to produce long after the garden itself has gone to weeds. Someone stole the peach-palm fruit belonging to a man in the other group, resulting in another food theft for revenge, a club fight, and then raiding, but it should be pointed out that the raiding came about only after a long history of disputes between the groups; food theft was merely the catalyst that finally initiated the hostilities.

The Yanomamö themselves regard fights over women as the primary causes of their wars. I was in one of the more remote villages in 1967, visiting with people I had met on my first field trip. The headman of the village, Shäwä, coveted my British commando knife and kept begging me to give it to him. He wanted me to tell him all about the knife, its origin, history, and how often it had been exchanged in trades. When I told

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

was killed in the incident. Manasinawã, his wife, and his daughter remained with Kąobawã's group, and he ultimately gave the daughter to Kąobawã for a second wife. Kąobawã still has her.

At this time, the groups, of Damowã and Kąobawã, respectively, were still at war with the Patanowã-teri, from whom they separated some fifteen years earlier. Damowã's group, after separating from Kąobawã's, attempted to make peace with the Patanowã-teri, as they were now vulnerable and could ill afford to remain on hostile terms with them. Damowã's group also made an alliance with the two Shamatari villages, which had given them cooperation when they staged the revenge treacherous feast discussed in the last chapter. For about five years relationships between Damowã's group and the Patanowã-teri were relatively amicable, but as the former's alliances with the Shamatari grew in strength, their relationship to the Patanowã-teri grew cool once again.

The Patanowã-teri then became embroiled in new wars with several villages on the Orinoco River and turned to Kąobawã's group for aid, hoping to patch up their old grievances and remain at peace. The first day I began my fieldwork marked the initiation of complete peace between Kąobawã's group and the Patanowã-teri: They were having a feast together in Bisaasi-teri. Damowã's group, the Monou-teri, were not participating in the feast, but a large number of men came anyway. They discovered a group of seven Patanowã-teri females outside the main village and could not resist the temptation: They forcefully took them back to Monou-teri. Later that day the Patanowã-teri men discovered that the women were missing, so they searched the neighborhood and found the tracks of the Monou-teri men at the site of the abduction, where signs of struggling abounded. The next morning they went to Monou-teri armed with clubs: They were bound to get their women back, but did not care to start another shooting war with the Monou-teri. They took five of the women away from the Monou-teri in a heated struggle, but had to pull back without the remaining two, unless they were willing to shoot to kill: The Monou-teri were determined to keep the other women at all costs.

The significance of this incident is this: The headman of Monou-teri realized that the Patanowã-teri would not risk getting into a shooting war with them since they already had more enemies than they could comfortably handle. Hence, this provided an excellent opportunity for the Monou-teri to abduct women with relatively little chance of getting shot in retaliation.

Damowã, the headman of Monou-teri, was angry because the Patanowã-teri had recovered so many of their women. He then threatened to ambush the Patanowã-teri when they left for home after the feast at Bisaasi-teri was over. The Patanowã-teri, in view of this, cut their stay short and left for home before the feast was over, hoping to avoid trouble with the Monou-teri.

Damowã was not satisfied, however, that he forced the Patanowã-teri to capitulate, leave for home, and not attempt to recover the two remaining women. He decided to raid them. In January of 1966 he and a party of men from Monou-teri raided the Patanowã-teri at the latter's village. They caught Bosibrei climbing a *ratha* tree, a prickly, cultivated palm that must be climbed slowly and with the aid of a pair of moveable stick frames in order to avoid getting pierced by the needle-sharp thorns that protrude from the tree's trunk (see Fig. 2–6). Bosibrei was almost to the top of the tree when the raiders caught him—he made an excellent target silhouetted against the sky. They shot and killed him with one volley of arrows as he reached for the fruits of the palm. One of

726 If there are novices in the raiding party, the older men will conduct mock raids, showing
701 them how they are to participate. A grass dummy or soft log is frequently employed in
702 this, as was the case in the *wuyu itou* held in the village the day before the raiders left. Particularly young men will be positioned in the marching party somewhere in the middle of the single file of raiders so they will not be the first ones to be exposed to danger should the raiders themselves be ambushed. These young men will also be permitted to retreat first. Damowä had a twelve-year-old son when he was killed. This boy, Matarawä, was recruited into the raiding party to give him an opportunity to avenge his father's death. The older men made sure he would be exposed to minimum danger, as this was his first raid.

726 The separated groups of raiders approach the village at dawn and conceal themselves near the commonly used paths to the source of drinking water. They wait for the enemy to come to them. A good many of the victims of raids are shot while fetching water.

Frequently, the enemy is wary and acts defensively at all times when there is an [722] active war going on. Only large groups of people can leave the village, and these are well armed. Raiders will not attack a large group such as this. When the enemy is found to be this cautious, the raiders have no choice but to retreat or to shoot volleys of arrows blindly into the village, hoping to strike someone at a distance. They retreat after they release their arrows, depending on the gossip of other villages to learn if their arrows did find their marks. Rarely, one of the raiders will attempt to enter the village during the night and kill someone while he sleeps. Damowä's younger brother allegedly accomplished this on one raid, but few men are brave enough to try it. Most of the time the raiders manage to ambush a single individual, kill him, and retreat before they are discovered. This is considered to be the most desirable outcome of the raid.

722 The women were nervous, frightened, and irritable while the men were away,
[562] and they were constantly on the lookout for raiders from other villages. This is always
*[628] a time to suspect raiders, since allies occasionally turn on their friends when the women are poorly guarded, abducting as many as possible while their husbands are away.

After several days the women were so frustrated and anxious that fights began to [578] break out among them. One woman got angry because another one, her sister and co-wife, [593] left her to tend a small baby. When the mother returned, the angry one picked up a piece of firewood and bashed her on the side of her head with it, knocking her unconscious and causing her ear to bleed profusely.

726 The raiders had been gone almost a week when Kaobawä and his youngest brother
484 staggered into the village, nearly dead from exhaustion. Kaobawä's pains had gotten
[64] so bad that he decided to turn back just before they reached the Patanowä-teri village. He could barely walk by that time and would not have been able to elude pursuers should the enemy have given chase. Shararaiwä, his brother, decided to accompany him back lest he run into a group of Patanowä-teri hunters, or his condition grow even more severe. Shortly after they had dropped out of the raiding party, Shararaiwä stepped on a snake and was bitten. The rains had started, and the snakes were beginning to concentrate on the higher grounds, making walking a hazard. His leg began to swell immedi- [758] ately, and he could not walk. Hence, Kaobawä had to carry him out on his back, despite the fact that he could barely walk himself. Carrying him for nearly two days, he managed to reach the Orinoco River. Here, he intended to make a bark canoe and float the rest of